1.   A method for managing message units, the method comprising:

receiving a list of potential calling parties associated with a subscriber, the list including identification information regarding the listed potential calling parties;

associating a priority level to each of the listed potential calling parties; and,

5   screening calls based on at least one of a calling line identification and a personal identification code associated with the calls and based on information included in the list of potential calling parties, on the associated priorities and on a current cost of message units.

10   2.   The method of claim 1 wherein screening calls comprises:

determining that the calling party is not a listed potential caller; and

assigning a low priority to the calling party.

3.   The method of claim 1 wherein screening calls comprises:

15   determining that the calling party is a listed potential caller; and

assigning the priority associated with the listed potential caller to the calling party.

4.   The method of claim 1 wherein screening calls comprises:

20   determining a calling line identification associated with the calling party;

comparing the calling line identification with the dentification information of the listed potential calling parties;

finding a calling line identification in the list of potential calling parties that matches the calling line identification associated with the calling party; and

25   assigning a priority level associated with the calling line identification found in the list of potential calling parties to the calling party.

5.   The method of claim 1 wherein screening calls comprises:

receiving a personal identification code from the calling party;

30   comparing the personal identification code with the identification information of the listed potential calling parties;

finding a personal identification code in the list of potential calling parties that matches the personal identification code received from the calling party; and

assigning a priority level associated with the personal identification code found in the list of potential calling parties to the calling party.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein screening calls comprises:

completing the requested call to a mobile device of the subscriber if the current ration state is unrestricted and the priority level of the calling party is high.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein screening calls comprises:

requesting billing information regarding the subscriber from a billing system.

8. The method of claim 7 wherein requesting billing information regarding the subscriber from a billing system comprises:

requesting information regarding unused allocated air time from an allotment of air time in an air time allocation period associated with the subscriber.

9. The method of claim 7 wherein requesting billing information regarding the subscriber from a billing system comprises:

requesting information regarding a current cost to the subscriber of air time.

10. A method for managing air time, the method comprising:

receiving a list of potential calling parties associated with a subscriber, the list including identification information regarding the listed potential calling parties;

associating a priority level with each of the listed potential calling parties;

receiving a call request from a calling party directed at user equipment of the subscriber;

determining a priority level associated with the calling party;

determining a current air time ration state associated with the subscriber; and

processing the call request according to the current ration state and the priority level of the calling party.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein determining the priority level associated with the calling party comprises:

determining that the calling party is not a listed potential caller; and

assigning a low priority to the calling party.

12. The method of claim 10 wherein determining the priority level associated with the calling party comprises:

determining that the calling party is a listed potential caller; and

assigning the priority associated with the listed potential caller to the calling party.

13. The method of claim 10 wherein determining the priority level associated with the calling party comprises:

determining a calling line identification associated with the calling party;

comparing the calling line identification with the identification information of the listed potential calling parties;

finding a calling line identification in the list of potential calling parties that matches the calling line identification associated with the calling party; and

assigning a priority level associated with the calling line identification found in the list of potential calling parties to the calling party.

14. The method of claim 10 wherein determining the priority level associated with the calling party comprises:

receiving a personal identification code from the calling party;

comparing the personal identification code with the identification information of the listed potential calling parties;

finding a personal identification code in the list of potential calling parties that matches the personal identification code received from the calling party; and

assigning a priority level associated with the personal identification code found in the list of potential calling parties to the calling party.

15. The method of claim 10 wherein determining the current air time ration state associated with the subscriber comprises:

determining a remaining air time allocation period fraction associated with the subscriber;

determining a remaining air time allocation fraction associated with the subscriber;

determining a remaining air time allocation period to air time allocation fraction ratio associated with the subscriber; and,

determining the current air time ration state based on the air time allocation period to air time allocation fraction ratio .

16. The method of claim 10 wherein determining the current air time ration state associated with the subscriber comprises:

calculating the current air time ration state based on a function of remaining allocated air time in an air time allocation period.

17. The method of claim 10 wherein determining the current air time ration state associated with the subscriber comprises:

calculating the current air time ration state based on a current subscriber cost of air time.

18. The method of claim 10 wherein determining the current air time ration state associated with the subscriber comprises:

determining a current time associated with the subscriber;

determining a remaining air time allocation associated with the current time; and,

determining the current air time ration state as a function of the remaining air time allocation.

19. The method of claim 18 wherein determining a current time comprises:
determining a current day of a week.

20. The method of claim 18 wherein determining a current time comprises:
determining a current time of day.

21. The method of claim 10 wherein processing the call according to the current ration state and the priority level comprises:

completing the requested call to a mobile device of the subscriber if the current ration state is unrestricted and the priority level of the calling party is high; and

connecting the calling party to a message service if the current ration state is at a maximum restriction and the priority level of the calling party is low.

22. The method of claim 10 wherein determining the current air time ration state associated with the subscriber comprises:

requesting billing information regarding the subscriber from a billing system.

23. The method of claim 22 wherein requesting billing information regarding the subscriber from a billing system comprises:

requesting information regarding unused allocated air time from an allotment of air time in an air time allocation period associated with the subscriber.

24. The method of claim 22 wherein requesting billing information regarding the subscriber from a billing system comprises:

requesting information regarding a current cost to the subscriber of air time.

25. A system operative to conserve message units for a subscriber, the system comprising:

a potential caller list manager operative to receive and maintain a list of potential callers in association with priority levels of the callers, the list being associated with the subscriber;

a message unit conserver operative to determine a priority of a calling party based on the list of potential callers and to determine a current message unit ration state based on a current cost of message units to the subscriber; and

a call processor operative to process a call request of the calling party based on the determined priority of the calling party and the determined current message unit ration state.

26. The system of claim 25 wherein the message unit conserver is operative to determine the current message unit ration state based on a current opportunity cost measured in terms of remaining message units from a basic allotment of message units in a message unit allocation period.

27.   The system of claim 25 wherein the message unit conserver is operative to determine a priority of a calling party based on the list of potential callers and to determine a current message unit ration state based on a current cost of message units to the subscriber.

28.   The system of claim 25 wherein the message unit conserver is operative to request a current message unit billing category associated with the subscriber from a billing system, to receive the current message unit billing category and use the current billing category to determine the current message unit ration state based on a current cost of message units to the subscriber.

29.   The system of claim 25 wherein the message unit conserver is operative to request information from a billing system regarding used message unit in a current message unit billing category from an allotment of message units in the current message unit billing category associated with the subscriber, to receive the information regarding the used message units and use the information regarding the used message unit to determine the current message unit ration state.

30.   A system for managing message units, the method comprising:

means for receiving a list of potential calling parties associated with a subscriber, the list including identification information regarding the listed potential calling parties;

means for associating a priority level with each of the listed potential calling parties;

means for receiving a call request from a calling party directed at user equipment of the subscriber;

means for determining a priority level associated with the calling party;

means for determining a current message unit ration state associated with the subscriber; and

means for processing the call request according to the current ration state and the priority level of the calling party.